

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P 300625Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4923

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 05046

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, UNHCR, VS, US

SUBJ: USG RELATIONS WITH UNHCR AND RELATED SUBJECTS

REF: VIENTIANE 5029

1. DURING HIS VISIT TO EMBASSY JULY 29, CASELLA MENTIONED IN PASSING FACT THAT AN ACCOUNT OF HIS JULY 21 TELECON FROM VIENTIANE WITH SIEVERTS WAS PASSED BY CARLIN OF US MISSION GENEVA TO MACE OF UNHCR. THIS RESULTED IN A RE-BUKE TO CASELLA FROM MACE FOR "GOING OUTSIDE UNHCR CHANNELS." IN RESPONSE, CASELLA IS TAKING THE LINE (TECHNICALLY CORRECT) THAT TELECON WAS "NOT A UNHCR CALL" SOMEONE ELSE WAS TALKING TO SIEVERTS AND MERELY OFFERED CASELLA CHANCE TO DO THE SAME.

2. CASELLA APPEARED TO SHRUG THIS OFF, BUT HE OBVIOUSLY DESERVES BETTER PROTECTION. HE SAID HIS OPERATING PHILOSOPHY HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO LOOK FOR PARALLEL UNOFFICIAL CHANNELS; THUS HE HAS BEGUN WORKING WITH THE LONG-TIME "UNOFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE" OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN BANGKOK AFTER LEARNING THAT IT WAS THAT REPRESENTATIVE WHO DIRECTED THE TWO VIETNAMESE SEAMEN (REFTTEL) TO TRAVEL FROM BANGKOK TO VIENTIANE. HE SAYS HE FINDS THIS REPRESENTATIVE KNOWLEDGEABLE AND WELL WIRED-IN, FULLY AWARE OF HANOI'S THINKING AND APPROACH, ETC., AND INTENDS

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TO USE HIM MORE AND MORE IN FUTURE.

3. CASELLA ALSO GAVE POL COUNS A SCATHING CLAUSE-BY-CLAUSE REFUTATION OF DEPARTMENT'S MESSAGE TO UNHCR (STATE 172139), WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED BOTH FROM US AND FROM BANGKOK. WHILE HE SAID HE REALIZED ITS PROBABLE NECESSITY IN U.S. DOMESTIC TERMS, HE MAINTAINED THAT STATEMENT IS INACCURATE IN VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING IT SAYS ABOUT UNHCR AND, IN ITS CRITICISM OF THE VIETNAMESE, TOTALLY IGNORES THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE USG BUILT UP ABOUT THEM DURING MORE THAN TEN YEARS OF WAR. HE USED ANALOGY OF MILITARY OFFENSIVES, WHICH -- AS WE HAVE TOLD THE WORLD -- DRV PREPARED LONG IN ADVANCE A J WHICH, ONCE UNDER WAY, WERE INFLEXIBLE EVEN WHEN UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED THEMSELVES. USG SHOULD THEREFORE BE LAST TO SHOW ASTONISHMENT THAT REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE WILL OPERATE SLOWLY IN THE SAME FASHION. HE ALSO SAID IT WAS ENTIRELY UNDERSTANDABLE TO HIM "HOW THE AUTHORITIES IN VIET-NAM CAN MISCONSTRUE" EVERYTHING HAVING TO DO WITH USG AND REPATRIATION. SOMEWHAT GRATUITOUSLY, HE REMINDED US THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE "ARROGANT PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY HAVE WON A WAR."

4. CASELLA ALSO SAID HE UNDERSTANDS RADIO SAIGON HAS TONED DOWN ITS "COME-HOME" PROPAGANDA SOMEWHAT IN RESPONSE TO UNHCR SUGGESTION. (CANNOT CONFIRM FROM HERE.)

5. CONCEPT OF BRINGING POTENTIAL REPATRIATES FROM GUAM TO VIENTIANE (VIENTIANE 4926; STATE 173982) IS STILL UNDER STUDY. NO RPT NO INDICATION WHEN IT MIGHT BE CARRIED OUT.

6. CASELLA HAD TWO QUESTIONS, ONE SPECIFIC AND ONE RATHER HYPOTHETICAL, TO WHICH HE WOULD LIKE ANSWERS:

A. HAS TUG SAIGON 240 RETURNED TO SAIGON, AND IF SO WAS ITS RETURN A DELIBERATE USG GESTURE? POL COUNS WAS FORCED TO SAY HE HAD STILL SEEN NO REPLY (TO STATE 165315) ON FIRST POINT AND COULD ONLY SPECULATE THAT ON SECOND POINT ANSWER WAS NEGATIVE. CASELLA INITIALLY WAS NOT STRONGLY INTERESTED IN THIS QUESTION (VIENTIANE 4873, PARA 10) BUT IS NOW; HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO TELL PRG

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IT WAS A GESTURE.

B. WOULD USG BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS REPATRIATION, AMCIT PRISONERS, AND RELATED ISSUES WITH PRG PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO UN OBSERVER MISSION IN NEW YORK?

CASELLA BELIEVES CONTACTS THERE WOULD FACILITATE PROGRESS ON SEVERAL ISSUES, ALTHOUGH HE FULLY RECOGNIZES *E("H.2)1KU#(K_"CP,_ QGQQNTR8/I.

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